

RELATIONSHIPS SELF IMPROVEMENT

Selfish people: 14 things they do and how to deal with them



by **Jude Paler**
August 4, 2019, 8:35 am



This may sound ironic but it's true.

Selfish people don't know they're being selfish.

They just assume they're nice people who care about their own happiness more than anything else.

But on their journey towards finding their happiness, they carelessly and intentionally walk over people.

According to [F. Diane Barth L.C.S.W. in Psychology Today](#), there are two defining characteristics of selfishness:

"Being concerned excessively or exclusively with oneself; Having no regard for the needs or feelings of others."

In every relationship, be it platonic or romantic, partners give and take from each other in equal measures without keeping count.

But a relationship with a selfish person means that they extract your love and affections, without giving back in return. They think that they are needed more than they need you.

Unfortunately, the traits of selfish people are not easy to notice. Most of the time, they are people pleasers and hide their dark side very well.

Barth says that dealing consistently with someone who is selfish can make your life miserable:



“Books have been written about narcissism, “Generation Me,” even “healthy” selfishness. But when someone you have to deal with regularly is consistently self-involved and self-centered, they can make your life miserable.”

According to Art Markman, Ph.D., professor of psychology, narcissists and psychopaths “tend to be quite selfish and manipulative”.

Not until you let them in and drop your guard down that they start showing their true colors.

So watch out for these early signs that I believe make up a selfish person.

1. Selfish people are very good manipulators

Ultimately, with a selfish person, all situations and relationships are about them.

According to emotional healing expert Darlene Quimet, manipulative people simply don't question themselves:



“Controllers, abusers, and manipulative people don't question themselves. They don't ask themselves if the problem is them. They always say the problem is someone else.”

A manipulative person refers to someone who seeks to control people and circumstances just to achieve what they want. They might use [emotional blackmail](#). Selfish people are skilled manipulators by instinct and a control freak at heart.

According to Abigail Brenner M.D. in [Psychology Today](#), manipulative people “truly believe that their way of handling a situation is the only way because it means that their needs are being met, and that's all that matters.”

Manipulation is a scary thing because it is not something that we are born with. It can be developed over time and is practiced.

2. Selfish people are uncaring towards others

Selfish people are uncaring and neglectful to other people's needs.

For example, if you open up your emotions to them, they may try to manipulate you to get what they want or make you feel guilty.

According to Timothy J. Legg, Ph.D., CRNP in [Health Line](#), if you're upset, an emotionally manipulative person may try to make you feel guilty for your feelings.

They may use phrases like “If you really loved me, you'd never question me” or “I couldn't take that job. I wouldn't want to be away from my kids so much.”

If you are in this situation, you should not rely on them. Rather, to put yourself first when you are with them.

3. Selfish people plot and scheme against you

This is particularly the case of selfish people that are full-blown narcissists.

Selfish people are manipulative and they're looking to get something out of you for their own benefit.

Abigail Brenner M.D. wrote on *Psychology Today*, "Manipulative people are really not interested in you except as a vehicle to allow them to gain control so that you become an unwilling participant in their plans."

They might start mentioning weeks in advance about something that might happen or they fear will happen.

So when shit hits the fan, don't be surprised and do what you can to get back control of the situation.

4. Selfish people are conceited and self-centered

The way selfish people think is that they want to be put first. However, they are not satisfied with being the priority. They also want to put you down.

Ever met someone who insists that everything they say is of relevance and everything that you say is not? That is a classic example of a selfish person.

According to F. Diane Barth L.C.S.W. in *Psychology Today*, self-involved people are unlikely to be very responsive to your needs:



"If someone is both totally self-involved and uncaring about anyone else, they are not likely to be very responsive to you in any way other than evaluating how you meet their needs."

The way in which to deal with this is to simply ignore them. Let them be how they are and do not let it [affect you personally](#).

[To learn how to deal with selfish and toxic people, and build your own resilience, check out my eBook: [The Art of Resilience: A Practical Guide to Developing Mental Toughness](#)]

5. Selfish people find sharing and giving difficult

Maybe you know of a selfish person but you have some doubts because that someone shows a caring side.

Let me tell you this, it's all fake. Caring, sharing, and giving are not an easy thing for them to do and those actions will show through in this situation.

For one, they will want something in exchange. Maybe they want everyone to know about it so that they are praised for it.

If you are in this situation, just let their gesture of goodwill go unnoticed and don't praise them for it.

6. Selfish people put their own goals ahead of other people

Art Markman, Ph.D., professor of psychology at the University of Texas and author of *Brain Briefs*, [told SELF](#), "When we call someone selfish (as a trait), we mean that they consistently put their own goals ahead of those of other people."

According to [Sarah Newman, MA, MFA in Psych Central](#), “Selfish people need other people, and that’s why they’re always violating boundaries.”

Because of their way of thinking, they expect other people to do things for them. When you see that this is happening, do not let them have what they want.

It’s all about control, so do not give it to them.

7. Selfish people do not show weakness or vulnerability

Selfish people do not do anything for free. They have the fear of trying something and feeling that the action doesn’t actually help or serve much of a purpose.

It’s always “What’s in it for me?”

According to [Leon F Seltzer Ph.D.](#), narcissists “are effective in safeguarding against extreme vulnerability.”

Selfish or narcissistic people are scared to show weakness. They think that by helping other people, he or she is demonstrating weakness or internal insecurity.

They do not realize that everyone has weaknesses, even them. These weaknesses are what make us human but for them, they are above all else so they are close to being perfect.

8. Selfish people don’t accept constructive criticism

People who are selfish cannot and will not accept constructive criticism. Their huge egos just can’t process that constructive criticism is for their own good.

Krauss explained on *Psychology Today* that, “[Egocentrism can cause us](#) to make incorrect assumptions about what other people are thinking or feeling” and “annoyed or even enraged when others fail to see things their way.”

This is particularly the case with a narcissist, [says Leon F Seltzer Ph.D. in Psychology Today](#):

“When criticized, narcissists show themselves woefully incapable of retaining any emotional poise, or receptivity.”

They only think that you are attempting to devalue their work and their potential. This situation will always end up with the selfish person defending themselves.

Indeed, it is very difficult for them to realize that they are wrong.

9. Selfish people believe they deserve everything

Being selfish is not only characterized with self-centeredness but also with false sense of entitlement.

For example, they expect to be continuously rewarded even without doing anything. The reason? They just deserve everything and they’re perfect.

According to [Margalis Fjelstad, PhD, LMFT in Mind Body Green](#), narcissists believe that everything around them should be perfect:

““

“They believe they should be perfect, you should be perfect, events should happen exactly as expected, and life should play out precisely as they envision it. This is an excruciatingly impossible demand, which

results in the narcissist feeling dissatisfied and miserable much of the time.”

They believe that they will always be successful because they are who they are.

10. Selfish people do not listen to those who do not agree with them

According to [Timothy J. Legg, PhD, CRNP in Health Line](#), narcissists “can be too busy talking about themselves to listen to you....[they] won’t stop talking about themselves...[and] won’t engage in conversation about you.”

When you say something to a selfish person, even if it’s constructive, will be taken against you. They will think that you are their enemy and you do not deserve their respect or attention.

Criticism is good because it lets you learn from the opinions of others. But a selfish person has no time to broaden one’s horizons and grow.

11. Selfish people criticize others behind their backs

Selfish people prefer easy judgment and nothing is easier than judging behind a person’s back.

Deep down, they fear that they are not right and will pass this judgment to others, from a distance.

They may do this because they believe they are better than other people, according to Rhonda Freeman Ph.D. in [Psychology Today on an article on narcissism](#):



“They believe they are better than other people, and usually, the variables that are self-enhanced are related to “power and status.”

12. Selfish people exaggerate their achievements

One of the most notorious deficiencies of selfish people is their lack of humility.

Humility, considered as a precious human virtue, is needed for us to grow as people and as social beings in our environment.

But selfish people, having huge egos, will always look for ways to stand out and exaggerate their achievements.

Unfortunately, [Rhonda Freeman says](#) that you won’t be able to change their mind, either:



“Indisputable evidence of their inaccurate, overly inflated self-assessment does not change the self-view of someone high in narcissism.”

13. Selfish people are scared of public failure

[Suzanne Degges-White Ph.D.](#) says that “narcissists are unable to tolerate failure of any sort and public humiliation is considered the worst type of failure that could happen.”

Selfish people cannot bring themselves to think of their failure. When they fail, either they run from the situation or blame others.

However, when other people fail is another story. They don't think twice about giving out severe criticism when others fail.

You may also like reading (article continues below):

- [These 20 brutal truths about life will help you get your sh*t together](#)
- [How to let go of someone you love: 16 no bullsh*t tips](#)
- [Breaking up with a narcissist: 12 things you need to know](#)

Most of the time, they are the first ones to tell you that you “should've seen that coming.”

14. Selfish people dominate others

[According to Dan Neuharth, Ph.D., MFT](#), “Many narcissists pursue a win-at-all-costs, anything-goes approach.”

Do you know someone who calls you up whenever he or she feels like it? Or asks you to meet them at their whims and fancies?

This is one characteristic of a selfish person – they wrap you around their fingers and it's pretty hard to break loose. Victims of selfish people end up losing confidence.

[Dan Neuharth](#) says that “Narcissists distort the truth through disinformation, oversimplifying, ridiculing and sowing doubt. Narcissists can be incredibly skilled at using classic elements of thought-control and brainwashing.”

If you are in this situation, turn the table around and do not lose your personality. If they can't take your assertiveness, they will walk out of your life. And that's a good thing for you.

If you're wondering how to deal with a selfish person, check out the below 10 tips.

[Not only does Buddhism provide a spiritual outlet for many people, it can also improve your health and wellbeing. Check out my new no-nonsense guide to using Buddhism for a better life [here](#)].

How to deal with selfish people: 10 no-nonsense tips





1) Accept that they have no regards for others

As annoying as it is that you're dealing with a selfish person, you need to accept the way they are.

Otherwise, you'll get frustrated and annoyed with their behavior.

According to Sarah Newman, MA, MFA in Psych Central, "Selfish people consume the time and energy of others and, despite what you tell yourself, there's no end in sight to their narcissism."

Here are some things that you need to accept about them, rather than get frustrated by:

- They won't put your needs first.
- They won't be thoughtful and considerate.
- They'll purely look out for their own interests.

Once you've accepted these things about them, you won't negatively react when they act selfish. Because they will act selfish.

And now you can focus on the below more important ways to deal with them.

2) Give yourself the attention you know you deserve

Selfish people only want attention for themselves. But they don't want to give it.

And there's no point trying to change a selfish narcissistic person. According to licensed clinical psychologist Dianne Grande, Ph.D., a narcissist "[will only change if it serves his or her purpose.](#)"

So it's time to turn the tide and focus on yourself.

Forget about their problems that they can't stop babbling about and focus on you.

If you're feeling a bit down, ask yourself why. If you feel a little shabby, go and get a haircut and a massage.

You don't have to ignore your own needs to give attention to a self-absorbed energy sucker.

It will only make you [emotionally drained](#) and you won't be able to help out people who actually do need the help.

3) Whatever you do, don't fall to their level

Selfish people are frustrating. They only care about themselves and they'll manipulate you to get what they want.

While it may be difficult to not be triggered by a selfish person's behavior, there's no point in attacking them. As [Marla Tabaka points out in INC](#), your "energy is better spent in a productive conversation, which you'll find elsewhere."

According to Timothy J. Legg, PhD, CRNP in [Health Line](#) "don't try to beat them. Two people shouldn't play this game."

So it's crucial that you keep your wits about it and don't play their game. If you feel like they're manipulating you so you can help them out, put a stop to it.

In the same vein, don't emotionally react to their selfish behavior.

If they cause you to be angry or frustrated, then you're falling to their level of [toxic energy](#), which won't do anyone any good.

[Know yourself](#) and the loving person that you are.

4) Don't give them attention

According to Margalis Fjelstad, PhD, LMFT in [Mind Body Green](#):



"Narcissists need constant attention—even following you around the house, asking you to find things, or constantly saying something to grab your attention."

Selfish people crave people's attention. They constantly look for sympathy. This is why they love to play the victim.

So if you can avoid them, do it. As M.I.T. negotiation professor John Richardson [says](#): never asked yourself first, "How do I make this deal?" Instead, start with, "Should this deal be made?" With narcissists, the answer is usually it's not worth it.

5) Don't just talk about what they're interested in – talk about what interests you

Self-absorbed people can sabotage your conversations so that they only talk about themselves and what they're interested in.

[According to Preston Ni M.S.B.A. in Psychology Today](#):



"The narcissist loves to talk about him or herself, and doesn't give you a chance to take part in a two-way conversation."

Be mindful of this and don't let it happen.



You're not there to simply be a listener, especially when the topic of conversation is boring and it's all about them.

Bring up random and interesting stories that you love to talk about. If they can't handle it and want to get away from you, even better!

6) Stop doing everything that they demand you to do

There's no getting around it: Selfish people want people to do things for them.

The kicker?

They won't do anything for anyone else.

While it's important to help out someone when they need help, there's a line you don't cross.

Preston Ni M.S.B.A. in [Psychology Today](#) offers some great advice:



“The single most important guideline when you're dealing with a psychologically manipulative person is to know your rights, and recognize when they're being violated. As long as you do not harm others, you have the right to stand up for yourself and defend your rights.”

If they're constantly asking you to do things for them and they're doing nothing in return, then you need to put a stop to this one-sided agreement.

It's time to be assertive and stand up for yourself.

In a sensible manner, let them know that they never do anything for you and expect the world for themselves. You're just as important as they are.

(To dive deep into wisdom and techniques to help you live a better life, check out Hack Spirit's no-nonsense guide to taking responsibility for your life [here](#))

7) Don't spend too much time with them

This is an obvious one, but many people make the same mistake over and over.

If you're getting frustrated with how toxic and self-absorbed they are, limit your time with them.

Timothy J. Legg, PhD, CRNP has some great advice in [Health Line](#):



“Take charge and carve out some “me time.” Take care of yourself first and remember that it’s not your job to fix them.”

Simple, right?

Sometimes you have to respect yourself and your time. They might complain that you don’t have much time for them anymore, but stand firm.

Only see them every now and then. In this way, you can keep the friendship going but you won’t be as affected by their toxic energy.

8) Hang out with people better

The people you hang out with have a huge influence on your life.

According to life hacking expert Tim Ferriss, we’re the average of the 5 people we hang out with most.

If you continually hang out with selfish people, you might become selfish yourself. Now I know and you know that you don’t want that.

So what can you do? Hang out with people who are positive and uplifting. Life is too short to spend time with toxic and selfish people!

9) End the relationship

This is a drastic step. But if this selfish person is really getting to you and they’re seriously hindering your life, then you might want to consider what life might look without them.

If this selfish person is a narcissist, it’s not out of the question that they’ll [damage you emotionally](#).

Narcissists are all about themselves and they’ll do anything to get what they want.

As we have mentioned above, there’s not much point in trying to change them as a narcissist “[will only change if it serves his or her purpose](#).”

Sometimes you need to look out for yourself and your own emotional health. If you feel that they have the potential to damage you, then it might be time to bite the bullet and get rid of them.

(If you want to stop people from manipulating you, then you need to stand up for yourself. If this scares you, it’s time to embrace your inner beast. Find out how in this [free masterclass](#) by our friends at Ideapod)

In Conclusion

Selfish people cause pain to the people around them.